

VZCZCXRO8079  
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHMK #0034/01 0151408  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 151408Z JAN 07  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6294  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHBVAKS/COMUSNAVCENT PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MANAMA 000034

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EMBASSIES KUWAIT/RIYADH, PLEASE PASS TO A/S WELCH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [BA](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [REGION](#) [OFFICIALS](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES GCC PLUS TWO, REGIONAL  
ISSUES WITH AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 3663

Classified By: Ambassador William T. Monroe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

-----  
Summary  
-----

11. (C) During their January 15 meeting, Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid told the Ambassador that Bahrain had no problem with a statement being issued at the January 16 GCC Plus Two meeting in Kuwait, but he thought the Saudis and Kuwaitis were concerned with aspects of the paragraph on Iraq. Bahrain supports the President's Iraq strategy and it should be given time to succeed. Shaikh Khalid pledged to say this publicly upon his arrival in Kuwait the next day. Bahrain agrees that Iran is the source of danger and trouble in the area, and the U.S. and the countries of the region should face this threat together. Referring to press coverage of U.S. policy on Iraq, Shaikh Khalid raised the possible deployment of Patriot batteries to the region and said he wants to make sure Bahrain is covered. He noted that Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora would visit Bahrain later in the day to discuss Bahraini participation at the January 25 conference in Paris with the King. Bahrain supports the Lebanese government "against all intimidations." They also discussed Somalia, Bahraini detainees at Guantanamo, and a Kenyan-Bahraini runner who was stripped of his citizenship. End Summary.

-----  
No Problem with GCC Plus Two Statement  
-----

12. (C) Opening their January 15 meeting, the Ambassador asked Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa for his views of the draft of a statement to be issued following the GCC Plus Two meeting to be held January 16 in Kuwait. He said the Secretary was strongly in favor of a statement. The President had taken a firm stand in the face of domestic opposition, and the United States needs public support from the region at this time. Shaikh Khalid said he had no problem with a statement being issued, but he thought that aspects of the paragraph on Iraq were "premature." He said the Saudis and Kuwaitis were particularly concerned about references to GCC-Iraq cooperation and a joint program on regional security issues. The Iraqi government needs to take "bold steps" first to deal with the Iranian presence and armed militias. The GCC could help Iraq do this.

13. (C) Shaikh Khalid said Bahrain supports the President's

Iraq strategy announced last week, and it should be given time to succeed. Asked if he would say this publicly, Shaikh Khalid said he would make sure to say this to reporters upon his arrival the next day in Kuwait. He praised relations, saying "we agree we should move forward in the historic relations between the U.S. and the region, which is a true working partnership."

-----  
U.S., GCC Should Face Iranian Threat Together  
-----

¶4. (C) Turning to Iran, Shaikh Khalid said Bahrain agrees with the United States that Iran is the source of danger and trouble in the area -- in Iraq, Lebanon, with Hamas, and in the Gulf. The U.S. and the countries of the region should face this threat together, and Bahrain does not hesitate to pitch in, he said, referring to the three Bahraini Navy ships that were active in last year's Proliferation Security Initiative exercise and are currently participating in a combined naval task force. The GCC considers security in the area to the west of the King Fahd line in the middle of the Gulf to be the joint responsibility of the U.S. and the Gulf countries, and "we must be involved in defending our territory." Beyond the King Fahd line is the responsibility of the international community. He said Bahrain would not spare any effort to defend the Gulf and pressed for a clear strategy laying out the responsibilities of each country in dealing with the Iranian challenge.

¶5. (C) Referring to press coverage on aspects of U.S. policy on Iraq, Shaikh Khalid said he had heard about the possible deployment of Patriot batteries to the region. He wants to make sure that Bahrain is covered. Shaikh Khalid said he

MANAMA 00000034 002 OF 003

would raise this privately with the Secretary in Kuwait and that King Hamad would discuss it with Defense Secretary Gates during his visit to Bahrain later in the week.

-----  
Bahrain to Attend Paris Conference for Lebanon  
-----

¶6. (C) In response to the Ambassador's question, Shaikh Khalid said that Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora would come to Bahrain later in the day January 15 for a meeting with the King. Siniora wants to discuss Bahraini participation at the January 25 conference in support of Lebanon in Paris (reftel). Shaikh Khalid said Bahrain would be represented at the ministerial level, but no decision had yet been made on who it would be. He thought it could be either Finance Minister Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Khalifa or Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Nizar Al Baharna, who will both be at the Davos conference at that time. If they cannot make it, Shaikh Khalid said he would attend.

¶7. (C) Shaikh Khalid said Bahrain is very supportive of the Lebanese government "against all intimidations." Siniora will find that he has friends and supporters in Bahrain. Shaikh Khalid pledged that Bahrain would respond to any Lebanese request to help, noting that bilateral relations were very good. He indicated that the Lebanese government had never requested Bahraini assistance for the Lebanese Armed Forces.

-----  
Warlords in Mogadishu  
-----

¶8. (C) Changing subjects, Shaikh Khalid said that although it is a mess, Somalia is in a "better mess" now that the Islamic Courts Union is out. He warned however, that the Somali government should now clear the streets of the warlords who are now roaming Mogadishu. The Somali government needs help and African countries should get

involved by providing money and weapons. He warned there could be spillover from Somalia into Yemen and Oman.

-----  
Guantanamo Detainees  
-----

¶9. (C) The Foreign Minister asked for an update on the status of the two remaining Bahraini detainees at Guantanamo. He said that he expected intensified Parliamentary pressure on this issue in the coming months. (Comment: One of the loudest parliamentarians on this issue, Mohammed Khalid, is now a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, which will give him an enhanced platform to press the government on the detainees.) He thought this issue would be raised with Deputy Secretary of Defense England during his January 22 visit to Bahrain.

-----  
Runner Loses Citizenship  
-----

¶10. (C) The Ambassador said that the way the Bahraini government stripped a Kenyan-Bahraini runner of his citizenship for running in the Tiberias Marathon in Israel was disappointing. At a time when the United States is promoting moderation with its Arab partners, this looked like a radical act. Stating that he had been out of the country at the time, Shaikh Khalid said the matter had been handled badly and it had not been addressed at a political level. It was rushed through without proper reflection. He thanked the Ambassador for raising the issue and said he would discuss it further with the Bahraini leadership.

-----  
ForMin Washington Trip Off  
-----

¶11. (C) Shaikh Khalid told the Ambassador that he would accompany Crown Prince Shaikh Salman to Washington March 1-2. Unfortunately, Shaikh Khalid's separate visit to Washington in mid-February was canceled. He thought he might be able to come to Washington after the opening of the UN General Assembly in September 2007. The Ambassador cautioned that this was generally not an optimum time to visit Washington.

MANAMA 00000034 003 OF 003

\*\*\*\*\*  
Visit Embassy Manama's Classified Website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/manama/>  
\*\*\*\*\*  
MONROE